

RE: Raised HB no. 6355 and HB 6491

Co-Chair Winfield, Co-Chair Stafstrom, Vice Chair Kasser, Vice Chair Blumenthal and all members of esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Brooke Cheney. I am a mom, a firearms instructor and competitor, and a mental health advocate. I have been working for the last three years, as a volunteer, on Suicide prevention. This year I have also become the DC Project State Leader. For those of you who haven't heard of us, our motto is "Educate Not Legislate".

I am here today to OPPOSE HB 6335. In the bill's description it says, "to expand upon the list of persons who may be complainants for purposes of issuance of a risk warrant;" My understanding is that the expansion includes, Doctors and doctor assistants. As a gun owner who works to help break the stigma around mental health this is not a step in the correct direction. Education is what I wish we were talking about, not more legislation. This legislation not only makes it harder to break stigma around getting help, it makes it more unlikely that people who need help will come forward. The statistical fact is that two out of every three gun deaths is a suicide, this change in legislation has the possibility of actually causing more deaths than it prevents. My heart breaks for any loss of life by a gun. All loss is devastating. I would love to see us working on more proven preventative measures. In all of the studies I have read over the years, (which none are from the pro gun or Anti Gun groups) laws have been shown over and over to have minimal if any impact. Programs that are installed on violence prevention have had great results in many cases all across the country. I would also like us to be discussing ways to actually prevent violence at all levels, not just focusing on gun violence.

There are copious studies that have been done around rescuing violence, by the CDC, FBI, DOJ, Dept of Education, and more. I bring them up to you year after year in hopes one of these sessions, we will be discussing the hard work that needs to be done, not just the swipe of a pen that turns law abiding gun owners into unwanted targets and criminals.

I respectfully thank you for your time. If you would like to see some of the studies I am referring to I have listed some of them on a website: <https://savethousandsnotjustone.com/reports>

Thank you for your service,
Brooke Cheney
Harwinton CT
CT State Leader of The DC Project - <https://dcproject.info/>